Approved for Release: 2019/03/11 C06782148

[redacted] (b)(3)

PORTUGAL Antonio de Oliveira SALAZAR

Prime Minister

CENTRAL REFERENCE SERVICE

Dr. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, the oldest-established and perhaps least-known dictator in the world, has ruled Portugal since 1928 when he became Finance Minister. Never wavering in his belief that his form of government is best for Portugal and her overseas territories (which he has never visited), he continues to espouse, with only minor alterations, the same conservative political and financial doctrines which have characterized his regime for the past 39 years. A man of exceptional intellect, strong religious belief and complete devotion to duty, Salazar, since 1928, has been content to run the government without the benefit of limelight and, for the most part, opposition. Although popular discontent over social and economic conditions does exist, organized opposition remains weak and divided, and the main supporting groups behind the regime -- the armed forces, businessmen and the church -- remain loyal to Salazar. Further, his ability to maintain domestic order -- despite occasional opposition from students, mutinous military officers and, most recently, Roman Catholics -- and to hold on to the African provinces has reportedly resulted in renewed support for his regime from not only the key supporting groups but also much of the populace.

Since he regards the preservation of Portugal's presence in Africa as the principal achievement of his long rule, Salazar's reaction to both UN and US pressures designed to convince the regime that it should recognize the right of the inhabitants of Portuguese Africa to self-determination has always been negative and scornful. Although he does appreciate American generosity and accepts the necessity of American support for the defense of Western Europe, he has accused the United States of undermining the worldwide positions of its allies, notably Portugal, and has warned that the Western powers should no longer expect "automatic cooperation" from Portugal. Describing NATO in 1966 as totally "inadequate" for the present needs and as a source of "disastrous results," he proclaimed a policy of bilateral cooperation with countries that are ready to cooperate fully with Portugal. Regarding Portugal's relations with the Eastern countries, he has emphasized the continuation of his "policy of seeking to broaden the economic and commercial contacts." His strongly anti-Communist regime maintains diplomatic ties only with Cuba in the Communist world, but has been trading with several Eastern European nations. Salazar has stoutly supported the US effort in Vietnam.

Born on 28 April 1889, the only son of a farm laborer, Salazar was raised by his mother (whose maiden name, Salazar, he prefers to use instead of his father's surname de Oliveira) and four unmarried sisters in an

[redacted] (b)(3)

Sep 68

Approved for Release: 2019/03/11 C06782148

Approved for Release: 2019/03/11 C06782148

(b)(3)

Antonio de Oliveira SALAZAR (Cont'd.)

unpretentious whitewashed cottage on the outskirts of Santa Comba Dão, a village north of the old university center of Coimbra. Although his mother hoped he would enter the church, Salazar, after attending the Jesuit seminary in Viseu, entered the University of Coimbra, where he earned a law degree in 1914 and a full professorship in political economics in 1918. A leader of the Christian Democratic Academic Center, he was one of three Roman Catholics elected to Parliament in 1921. When the military junta established its dictatorship in 1926, Salazar, who had earned a reputation as a brilliant economist, was called by the junta to straighten out the chaotic state finances. Although he quit after two months because the junta refused to accept his austere concepts and demands for administrative control, he was called upon again in 1928, named Minister of Finance, and given the powers he demanded. His success in bringing stability to the economy brought him overwhelming public support, and in 1932 his position as the actual head of the government was formalized by his appointment as Prime Minister.

Persistent in his refusal to accept the popular adulation so common to totalitarian rulers, Salazar wears no medals on his conservative business suits and avoids public ceremonies and travel. Apart from maintaining a heavy work schedule, he lives a quiet, ascetic life in a small austere apartment behind a walled garden in Lisbon, refraining from smoking and drinking nothing stronger than a diluted wine.

(b)(3)
(b)(6)

On 7 September 1968, however, Dr. Salazar underwent brain surgery to have a hematoma (blood-filled swelling) removed from the right side of his head. (b)(1)
his condition was caused by a head injury (b)(3)
which occurred when a canvas deck chair collapsed under him sometime during August 1968. (b)(3)

A bachelor, Salazar is said to be, despite (b)(6)
the severity of his nature, a man of grave courtesy, with an excellent sense of humor and considerable personable charm. He speaks English.

September 1968 (b)(3)

(b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2019/03/11 C06782148